

Message

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY REPORT

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Report Highlights

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Highlights

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WEEKEND READ

[Electrifying India Positive, But Won't End Energy Poverty Soon](#)

By Lou Del Bello

Achieving total electrification in India by the end of March, as the Modi administration promised, won't solve the country's energy poverty problem, researchers said.

[Pentagon May Chuck Environmental Rules to Clear Border Wall](#)

By Travis Tritten

When President Donald Trump tapped the military to build his signature wall along the border with Mexico, the Pentagon zeroed in on what looked like a

project of opportunity – 37 miles along a drug-smuggling route in Arizona where, most importantly, it already owned the land.

THE WEEK IN CHEMICALS

Congress May Force EPA's Hand on Nonstick Chemicals (1)

By David Schultz

Momentum in Congress is building for legislation that would force the EPA to act earlier than planned on a class of toxic nonstick chemicals that have contaminated drinking water across the country.

EPA Chemicals Office Delays Draft Risk Reviews to End of Summer (1)

By Pat Rizzuto

The draft chemical risk evaluations that the EPA expected to publish by December 2018 will be released by the end of the summer, Cathy Fehrenbacher, acting director of risk assessment in the EPA's chemicals office, said.

New Chemicals Backlog May Be Unclogged With EPA Policy (1)

By Pat Rizzuto

The EPA hopes to clear a backlog of company requests to make new chemicals now that it has a clearer policy to identify possible future uses of those substances, an agency official said March 6.

EPA Leadership Slowed Chemical Assessments, Watchdog Says (1)

By Sylvia Carignan

EPA leadership's push to define the agency's priorities delayed its efforts to release chemical risk assessments, an independent audit said.

Court to Hear Lawsuit Challenging EPA Oversight Chemical Rules

By Pat Rizzuto

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit will hear oral arguments May 16 in a lawsuit challenging two of the EPA's three core rules describing its oversight of chemicals.

Chemical Makers Need to Better Explain Trade Secrets to EPA

By Pat Rizzuto

Chemical manufacturers need to better justify their requests to keep information secret in EPA submissions, attorneys told Bloomberg Environment March 7.

Congress Joins Fight Between Air Force and New Mexico

By David Schultz

Congress is getting involved in an ongoing dispute between the U.S. Air Force and the state of New Mexico over who should pay to clean up water contaminated with toxic nonstick chemicals.

THE WEEK AT EPA

Makeover of EPA's Science Office Long Planned by Career Staff

By Abby Smith and Amena H. Saiyid

The EPA is consolidating several of its science and research offices in a reorganization of the agency's scientific arm that was announced to staff March 7.

Sterigenics Head Met Repeatedly With EPA Over Toxic Carcinogen

By Amena H. Saiyid and Abby Smith

The head of Illinois medical sterilizer Sterigenics U.S. LLC has had at least half a dozen conversations with the EPA's top air official, as the agency considers tougher standards for ethylene oxide, a carcinogenic chemical.

THE WEEK AT INTERIOR

White House Officially Taps David Bernhardt for Interior Chief

By Rebecca Kern

The White House officially announced its intent to nominate Acting Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to run the agency overseeing the nation's public lands.

Offshore Drilling Plan Coming in Weeks, Interior Official Says

By Stephen Lee

The Trump administration will release its offshore drilling proposal "in the coming weeks," according to March 6 written testimony from the acting head of the Interior Department's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Democrats Assail Interior Official Over Failure to Testify

By Stephen Lee (Bloomberg Environment) and Jennifer A. Dlouhy (Bloomberg)

Democratic and Republican lawmakers butted heads March 6 over the failure of Scott Angelle, director of the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, to appear before a House panel to answer questions about the Trump administration's enforcement of offshore drilling policies.

Interior to Drop Protections for Gray Wolf (1)

By Tripp Baltz

The Fish and Wildlife Service will remove protections for the gray wolf in the lower 48 states and return management of the species to states and tribes.

Chairman's Suspicions Spur Probe Into Uranium Company Influence

By James Rowley

A House Committee is investigating the Trump administration's initiative to revive the U.S. mining industry that could benefit two uranium producers that have struggled in a time of worldwide oversupply of the radioactive ore.

THE WEEK IN POLLUTION

EU Takes Italy to Court Over Air Pollution Infractions (1)

By Janna Brancolini

Italy is the latest country to be referred to the European Court of Justice for failing to protect citizens from harmful levels of nitrogen dioxide.

House Passes Bill to Better Track Veteran Burn Pit Victims

By Tiffany Stecker

The House voted 416-0 on March 5 to better document the cause of death of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who inhaled toxic fumes from pits where trash is openly burned.

Overall Toxic Releases Up, With Declines in Air, Water, EPA Says

By Sylvia Carignan

The overall amount of chemicals discharged into the environment increased from 2016 to 2017, largely due to an uptick in land disposal, with metals mining being the largest source, the EPA said March 5.

THE WEEK IN CLIMATE

New Climate Panel's Republicans Seek Focus on Adaptation

By Tiffany Stecker

Republicans on the House's new climate-change panel see building more climate-resilient cities and coastlines as a priority—with talking about greenhouse gas emissions taking a back seat.

Kavanaugh Ruling May Keep Judges from Backing EPA Coolant Limits

By Abby Smith

A prior ruling on climate-warming coolants may tie the hands of federal appeals judges—even if they agree with chemical makers in support of limiting those coolants.

Big Projects Must Offset Emissions, Australian State EPA Says (1)

By Murray Griffin (Bloomberg Environment) and Dan Murtaugh (Bloomberg)

Companies in Western Australia face tough new requirements to offset their greenhouse gas emissions, and the state's EPA says they are necessary because federal policy is too weak.

Feds Reverse Progress in Addressing Climate Risks, GAO Says

By Abby Smith

The federal government isn't doing nearly enough to address the risks it faces from climate change, exposing itself and American taxpayers to potentially billions of dollars in damages, the Government Accountability Office said in a new report.

House's Tax Writers Enter 'Thorny' Carbon Tax Debate

By Dean Scott and Kaustuv Basu

The House's tax-writing panel is taking its first steps toward what will become a fractious debate: whether a carbon tax is the best way to tackle climate change and how to use the more than \$1 trillion in new revenue it would generate.

Energy Panel to Forge Climate Alliance on Clean Fossil Fuel

By Abby Smith

Two moderate lawmakers from fossil energy states say their partnership can prompt bipartisan climate policy, including boosting investment in cleaner, more efficient use of fossil fuels.

THE WEEK IN PESTICIDES

State Agencies Expect Little Improvement on Dicamba Complaints

By Adam Allington

State pesticide officials are bracing for another year of record complaints and investigations of crop damage related to dicamba, a common herbicide used to treat soybeans and cotton.

Enforcing Online Pesticide Sales a Growing EPA Priority

By Pat Rizzuto

States, tribes, and other officials that enforce EPA pesticide regulations say more emphasis on online product sales is warranted, the head of EPA's enforcement office said March 4.

Communicating Low Impact of Trace Pesticides in Food Trips Up EPA

By Adam Allington

The EPA says it needs to do more to tell people that small amounts of pesticides in food don't pose significant health risks.

Glyphosate Ruling in EU Court Confirms Public's 'Right to Know'

By Stephen Gardner

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was wrong to cite commercial confidentiality when refusing access to studies on the possible toxic and carcinogenic effects of a common herbicide, the EU Court of Justice ruled in twin March 7 judgments.

THE WEEK IN ENERGY AND MINING

Mining Law from 1872 Once Again an Overhaul Target

By Stephen Lee and Tiffany Stecker

A coalition of environmental groups will soon start knocking on doors in Congress, hoping to change a 147-year old mining law that has withstood earlier attempts to revise it.

Toxics Found Near Almost All Coal Ash Ponds Tracked by Industry

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy

Environmental watchdogs say the power industry's own data show widespread groundwater contamination near sites storing coal ash, a toxic byproduct of burning coal to generate electricity.

Endangered Whales v. Hunt for Oil and Gas Roils House Hearing

By Stephen Lee

Sharp partisan divides emerged in a March 7 hearing on the endangered right whale, whose survival is central to a debate on offshore oil and gas drilling.

Forthcoming Battery-Storage Incentive Bills Energize Backers

By Dean Scott and Lydia O'Neal

Senate and House backers of new tax incentives for next-generation batteries to store booming wind and solar generation plan to unveil legislation next week, lawmakers and aides said March 7.

THE WEEK IN THE STATES

New Mexico Sues Feds Over Air Force Base Pollution (1)

By Steven M. Sellers and Brenna Goth

Years of firefighting training exercises at two U.S. Air Force bases in New Mexico has contaminated groundwater with fluorinated chemicals that need to be cleaned up, the state charged in a lawsuit filed March 5.

Greater Climate Action in Oregon Hinges on Carbon Bill, Governor Says

By Bobby Magill

A cap-and-trade bill moving through the Oregon statehouse that would enact a carbon price needs to pass before the state considers joining the Western Climate Initiative and a more ambitious renewable energy mandate, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown (D) said March 8.

California to Survey Airports, Landfills, Wells for Contaminants

By Emily C. Dooley

California is launching a plan this month to require testing of drinking water wells, landfill facilities, and airport sites for so-called "forever chemicals" in an attempt to map out exposure to the contaminants.

Democratic State AGs See New Heads, Same Tactics at EPA, Interior

By Abby Smith

Democratic attorneys general are confident their success rate in challenging Trump climate rollbacks won't change, even though they'll face savvier new EPA and Interior Department leaders more experienced in Washington policy making.

Monitoring Data Used to List Texas County As Air Limit Violator

By Amena H. Saiyid

Monitoring data, not uncertain projections of future pollution levels, drove the EPA to conclude that the Texas county where San Antonio is located isn't meeting the 2015 federal ozone air pollution limits, the agency told a federal appeals court March 8.

California Ready to Fight for States' Rights on Air Pollution (1)

By Amena H. Saiyid

California is going to fight the federal government's move to strip states' power to set more stringent air pollution standards for cars, a state official testified before a Senate Environment and Public Works subcommittee.

Energy Department, California Spar Over Nuclear Site Cleanup

By Emily C. Dooley

California is battling federal authorities over how to clean up a contaminated former nuclear research site near Simi Valley that was also caught up in the flames of November's Woolsey Fire.

Colorado Lawmakers Weigh Dramatic Overhaul of Oil Drilling Laws

By Catherine Traywick (Bloomberg) and Tripp Baltz (Bloomberg Environment)

A proposal to overhaul Colorado's drilling laws had its first hearing on March 5, pushing the bill one step closer to a vote by the Democrat-controlled state legislature.

Minnesota Governor Pushes Carbon-Free Electricity by 2050

By Stephen Joyce

Minnesota's new governor joined other regional state executives in a push to require all electricity sold in the state to be generated from carbon-free sources by 2050.

Split Minnesota Legislature Gets Environmental Bill Into Law

By Stephen Joyce

A politically divided state legislature didn't prevent Minnesota lawmakers from getting a bill financing environment and infrastructure programs to Gov. Tim Walz's (D) desk.

California Politicians Push Declaration of Climate Emergency (1)

By Emily C. Dooley

State Sens. Henry Stern (D) and Nancy Skinner (D), and several California assembly members are pushing for a statewide declaration of a climate emergency in what's considered the fifth largest economy in the world.

N.J. Sues Exxon Mobil in Renewed Drive to Recoup Pollution Costs

By John Herzfeld

New Jersey sued Exxon Mobil Corp. March 7 in a bid to recover damages from hazardous chemicals seeping into groundwater and other natural resources at a 12-acre industrial site.

Massachusetts Seeks to Double Offshore Wind, Governor Says

(1)

By Adrienne Appel

Massachusetts will add another 1,600 megawatts of offshore wind to its grid—double the amount already planned, Gov. Charlie Baker (R) said March 6.

THIS WEEK'S PARTS PER BILLION PODCAST

How to Sell a Power Plant No One Wants to Buy (Podcast)

By David Schultz

The owners of Arizona's Navajo Generating Station are having a hard time finding someone who wants to take the power plant off their hands before its lease expires at the end of the year.



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